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ABSTRACT

This study used the Multiple Worlds Model, with culture as a central component, to examine adolescents' worlds and the types of transitions they make as they move from one context to another. Material for case studies was obtained from a 3-year research project with 55 adolescents varying in gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, achievement level, immigrant history, and transportation status from 5 desegregated Californian urban high schools. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, records examination, and shadowing. Findings indicated that there were six distinctive patterns as students made transitions: (1) congruent worlds: smooth transitions (typically, white middle class, high achieving students); (2) different worlds: transitions managed (typically, high achieving minority students); (3) different worlds: transitions difficult (students adapting in some circumstances but not in others); (4) different worlds: transitions resisted (typically low-achieving students); (5) congruent worlds: transitions resisted (students who do exceptionally well on standardized tests but receive poor grades); and (6) different worlds: smooth transitions (students in environments that enable bicultural and blended transcultural identities). The seven case studies illustrate the variety of circumstances and patterns, portraying students' efforts and abilities in making transitions, the types of transitions, the ease and difficulty in navigating various settings, the meanings derived, and the ways meanings combine to impact student engagement in school and learning. (Contains approximately 175 references.) (KB)